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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0133
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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [RW](#)

SUBJECT: MONTHLY POLITICAL ROUNDUP

REF: A. KIGALI 962 PREZ AND PRESS

- [¶B.](#) KIGALI 954 JALLOW
- [¶C.](#) KIGALI 865 PL
- [¶D.](#) KIGALI 822 MINISTERS AND PRESS
- [¶E.](#) 06 KIGALI 1133

Classified By: Ambassador Michael R. Arietti, reason 1.4 (B/D)

Summary

[¶1.](#) (SBU) Two Liberal Party parliamentarians lost their seats in the Chamber of Deputies after being expelled from their party. The government set up a Commission to investigate the shooting-down of the Habyarimana presidential jet in 1994. Two independent publishers temporarily suspended their publications in protest at heavy criticism from senior government officials. The ICTR Prosecutor toured new detention facilities for prisoners to be transferred to Rwanda. End summary.

Liberal Party Dissidents Lose Seats in Parliament

[¶2.](#) (U) Two Liberal Party (PL) members of Parliament, Elie Ngirabakunzi and Isaie Murashi, lost their seats in the Chamber of Deputies on October 9 when new members were sworn in by President Kagame. As noted ref C, the two parliamentarians had challenged the recent Liberal Party elections, alleging vote buying by the President and Vice President of the PL, Commerce Minister Protais Mitali and Senator Odette Nyiramlimo. In response, Mitali suspended and then expelled them from the party, and wrote to Parliamentary leadership, requesting their replacement (the Rwandan constitution requires the immediate replacement of members who leave or are expelled from their parties).

[¶3.](#) (U) The two parliamentarians sought relief in court, requesting an injunction from the High Court forbidding any swearing-in ceremony for the replacements. The High Court declined to intervene, and the two members later dropped an appeal to the Supreme Court on the injunctive relief after they had been replaced. The substantive case continues in the High Court, with the two parliamentarians seeking monetary damages and their reinstatement in the Liberal Party and in Parliament (the PL is counterclaiming for damages as well). The High Court is expected to rule in early November.

Government Sets Up Commission on Downing of Presidential Jet

14. (U) The Government of Rwanda (GOR) named on October 10 a seven-member Commission to investigate the downing of the Habyarimana presidential jet in April 1994, an event generally considered to have touched off the Rwandan genocide. Supreme Court Justice Jean Mutsinzi will lead the Commission, aided by several members of the Mucyo Commission, which has been investigating the French government's role in the 1994 genocide for the past eighteen months. Pending for a number of months, the appointment of the Commission is a GOR response to a French judge's indictment last year of nine senior Rwandan officials on suspicions of having participated in the downing of the jet. This act by the French judge precipitated the breaking of diplomatic relations with France in November 2006 (Ref E).

15. (C) Pol/econ chief spoke separately with Jean de Dieu Mucyo, eponymous chair of the Mucyo Commission, and Justice Mutsinzi. Mucyo confirmed that the Mucyo Commission would turn over investigation files to the new Commission, noting that his body had initially sought information on the French role in the downing of the jet, before focusing more narrowly on French acts more directly supportive of the genocide. His Commission's report would be tendered to the President in November, he said, and would "clearly document" French participation at all levels of planning and execution of the genocide. Justice Mutsinzi cautioned that the "decree is not even out yet" formally establishing his Commission, but said he anticipated the seven members beginning proceedings in early November.

Two Independent Publishers Suspend Publication in Protest

16. (SBU) On October 24 the editor of the RIMEG group, Charles Kabonero, publisher of Umuseso and its English-language version Newsline, announced suspension of his newspapers pending explanation from the GOR on RIMEG's alleged assistance to "negative forces" opposed to the Kagame government. In September four government ministers on Rwandan government television has accused several independent newspapers of assisting "negative forces" in their editorial policies and news stories (Ref D). In October, President Kagame and presidential advisors held a session with local press in which journalists friendly to the government had repeated these earlier criticisms (Ref A). The criticisms focused primarily on publications Umuseso, Umuco and Umuvugizi.

17. (C) On October 26, the editor/publisher of Umuco, Bonaventure Bizimuremye, announced he, too, would suspend his publication, Umuco, pending an explanation from the government for the allegations of assisting "negative forces." In conversation with embassy staff, both Bizimuremye and Kabonero said they each took their decision alone, with Bizimuremye saying he was suspending publication "for the moment." Editor Jean Bosco Gasasira told pol/econ chief October 26 that he would continue to publish his newspaper, and had not spoken with the others prior to their suspension decisions. All three publishers have been operating hand-to-mouth for some time, with few advertisements appearing in their publications, particularly relatively lucrative government advertisements. Gasasira had earlier alleged that President Kagame had pledged in the October meeting with the press corps to restore government advertisements to those newspapers that changed their editorial lines (Ref A).

ICTR Prosecutor Tours Detention Sites

18. (C) On October 17. International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda Prosecutor Bubacar Hassan Jallow toured the Central prison in downtown Kigali, examining the new facilities being erected to house prisoners proposed for transfer from Arusha under the ICTR's "completion strategy." Jallow pronounced himself well-satisfied with the new facilities, which include

televisions, separate washrooms and exercise yards, and a library. During this visit, in a call with embassy officers, he requested assistance from the United States in finding suitable relocation sites for witnesses and their families, in proposed ICTR prosecutions against Rwandan officials for alleged war crimes in 1994 (Ref B). Jallow noted the ICTR had told the GOR of these possible prosecutions, which would be transferred to Rwanda as part of the Tribunal's completion strategy.

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